

## issues - veterans and military affairs

### Veterans and Military Affairs

Rep. Slaughter has a long history of supporting the issues important to veterans in her district - from improving health care service to other quality of life benefits. She holds in the highest regard the sacrifices made by veterans and believes the federal government's role is honor veterans by treating them with fairness and dignity.

### Supporting Fairness in Retired Pay

Thousands of veterans who have a service-connected disability would benefit from legislation Rep. Slaughter has cosponsored. H.R. 303 would stop the practice of docking disabled veterans' retirement pay to offset the amount of disability pay they get, allowing them to receive both.

### Strengthening VA Health Care

Last year, Congress appropriated a record \$22 billion for veterans' health care; this year the House passed a budget resolution that contains a record \$2.8 billion increase for veterans' health care. Still, the demand for veterans' health care services continues to grow, outstripping available resources. Rep. Slaughter is supportive of finding ways to ensure that the VA health care system continues to have the resources it requires to provide timely and comprehensive health care to all veterans.

Rep. Slaughter voted for the Veterans' Hospital Emergency Repair Act, which unanimously passed the House of Representatives. This legislation authorizes construction projects to improve, renovate, and update patient care facilities at Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

In addition to improving the health facilities, Rep. Slaughter is committed to keeping the cost of care as low as possible. The VA's health care system offers a cost of care that can be 25 to 30 percent less expensive than comparable care in the private sector. She is a cosponsor of bills to prevent the VA from increasing prescription drug co-payments above the \$2 rate for the next five years and provide military retirees under age 65 with the option of health coverage under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. With a more narrow focus, Rep. Slaughter has also supported bills to provide that annuities paid to blind veterans be disregarded in determining supplemental security income benefits and afflicted veterans from the "Gulf War Syndrome" are not denied compensation based on narrowly crafted eligibility requirements.

### Improving Educational and Housing Benefits

Just as the President said that "no child should be left behind" in our nation's educational system, Rep. Slaughter shares that view for veterans and feels that they should enjoy all the educational opportunities possible. She is a cosponsor of the Montgomery GI Bill Expansion Act, which would improve the military's primary education package by paying the full costs of tuition, fees, books and supplies. The bill would also provide a living stipend and eliminate the \$1,200 basic pay reduction that is required under current law. Rep. Slaughter supports the Veterans Housing Fairness Act, a bill that allows veterans to use their VA loans to purchase co-operative housing units.

Rep. Slaughter is also a cosponsor of the Veterans Emergency Telephone Service (VETS) Act, a bill to set up a toll free national veterans' hotline service operating 24-hours, 7 days-a-week. This hotline would provide veterans immediate access to counseling and crisis intervention services, and information on medical treatment, substance abuse rehabilitation, emergency food and shelter services, and employment training and opportunities.